

### AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please revise paragraphs [0020], [0024], and [0026] of the specification as follows:

[0020] The output shaft 13 of the starter motor 12 is linked to one end of the crankshaft 11 by the starting gear transmission device 15. The starting gear transmission device 15 includes a long first-second shaft 16 and a short second-first shaft 17 supported by the opposed first and second fixed walls 10a and 10b of the engine body 10 between the output shaft 13 of the starter motor 12 and the crankshaft 11. A large-diameter gear 19 engaged with a pinion 18 at the external end of the output shaft 13 is fitted onto one end side of the first-second shaft 16, and a small-diameter gear 20 engaged with an idle gear 21 having an intermediate diameter rotatably supported by the second-first shaft 17 is fitted onto the other end side of the first-second shaft 16.

[0024] The vibration-proof structure of this starting gear transmission device 15 will be described in greater detail hereinafter with reference to FIG. 2 and FIG. 3. The above idle gear 21 turns on the second-first shaft 17 and can slide in the axial direction between the first and second fixed walls 10a and 10b. A wave washer 31 which is wavy in a peripheral direction is interposed between one end face of the idle gear 21 and a plane washer 33 placed on the end face of the second fixed wall 10b to surround the second-first shaft 17. The wave washer 31 is compressed by a predetermined amount between the end face of the idle gear 21

and the plane washer 33 placed on the end face of the second fixed wall 10b, whereby a predetermined set load for pressing the idle gear 21 toward the first fixed wall 10a is applied. As can be seen in FIG. 2, waved washer 31 includes first and second surfaces 31a, 31b, and is disposed directly around an outer circumference 71o the first gear shaft 17 with the first surface 31a thereof directly facing the fixed idle gear 21. In addition, the plane washer 33 is disposed directly around the outer circumference 17o the first gear shaft 17, and includes a first side 33a with an inner surface portion 33i directly facing a second surface 31b of the wave washer (elastic member) 31, and an outer surface portion 33o disposed radially outward with respect to the inner surface portion 33i and directly facing ends 30e of the cylinder portion 30. When the wave washer (elastic member) 31 is in a compressed state, only the outer surface portion 33o is able to contact the ~~ends~~the ring-shaped end 30e of the cylinder portion 30. Further, as can be seen in FIG. 3, an outer perimeter 31Pout of the wave washer (elastic member) 31 has a circular shape when viewed in plan view, and an inner perimeter 31Pin of the elastic member 31 has a non-circular shape when viewed in plan view. Referring back to FIG. 2, it can be seen that a second side 33b of the plane washer 33 is larger than the end face of the second fixed wall 10b, and the end face of the second fixed wall 10b is smaller in diameter than ~~ends 30e an inner diameter of the ring-shaped end 30e of~~ the cylindrical portion 30 formed on the first gear 21.

[0026] When the idle gear 21 vibrates on the second-first shaft 17 in the axial direction by load variation or the like during the starting of the engine, e.g., during the operation of the starting gear transmission device 15, this vibration can be absorbed by the elastic deformation of the wave washer 31 in the axial direction. In this case, when the idle gear 21 is pressed toward the second fixed wall 10b side by an excessive thrust load, the wave washer 31 is bent by a predetermined amount corresponding to the above space 32 and then the idle gear 21 brings the cylindrical portion 30 into contact with the second fixed wall 10b through the plane washer 33, whereby the bending amount of the wave washer 31 is regulated to restrain the generation of excessive resiliency. Therefore, it is possible to prevent the amplification of the vibration of the idle gear 21 caused by the excessive resiliency. The suppression of the vibration of the above idle gear 21 can reduce the whole vibration of the starting gear transmission device 15. At the same time, the durability of the wave washer 31 can be improved.